
IMPACT OF INFLUENCER MARKETING OF LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Dr. Janhavi Rao

Asst. Prof, Patuck-Gala College of Commerce

ABSTRACT

Influencer marketing has become an important part of social-media communication for lifestyle brands, particularly in categories such as fashion, beauty, wellness and travel. This study examines three factors that may shape consumer responses to influencer recommendations: influencer credibility, influencer authenticity and influencer-product congruence. A structured questionnaire was designed using a five-point Likert scale. For demonstrating the proposed empirical design, a dataset of 100 responses was generated and analysed using descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, correlation and simple linear regression. The results show positive relationships between credibility and purchase intention, authenticity and trust, and product congruence and purchase intention. The results are directionally consistent with recent influencer-marketing research, including evidence that credibility and product/message factors can influence consumer responses. The study concludes that lifestyle brands should focus not only on influencer reach but also on perceived credibility, genuine communication and a natural fit between the influencer and the promoted product.

Keywords: Influencer marketing, social media, lifestyle products, credibility, authenticity, product congruence, purchase intention, consumer trust

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has changed the way consumers discover, evaluate and discuss lifestyle products. Influencers occupy an important position in this environment because they combine personal communication, visual content and perceived expertise within platforms used daily by consumers. In India, the commercial relevance of social discovery has increased substantially. EY estimated the Indian influencer-marketing sector at about INR 2,344 crore in 2024 and projected it to reach INR 3,375 crore by 2026. A 2025 Meta-commissioned study also reported that almost eight in ten Indian shoppers discover products through social media, illustrating the importance of digital discovery in contemporary retail.

However, visibility alone does not explain why an influencer recommendation may affect consumer behaviour. Consumers may respond differently depending on whether the influencer is perceived as credible, whether the content appears authentic, and whether the product fits the influencer's image and audience. Recent academic work supports this multi-factor view. Belanche et al. (2021), for example, found that influencer-product and influencer-follower congruence can shape consumer attitudes and subsequent purchase and recommendation intentions. More recent meta-analytic evidence also identifies credibility and attractiveness as mechanisms through which influencer endorsements affect consumer responses.

The present study therefore focuses on three practical variables: credibility, authenticity and influencer-product congruence. The objective is not to treat influencer marketing as a single undifferentiated activity, but to examine the consumer perceptions that can make a lifestyle-product recommendation persuasive.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the influence of influencer credibility on purchase intention for lifestyle products.
- To examine the role of influencer authenticity in building consumer trust.
- To analyse the influence of influencer-product congruence on purchase intention.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Vrontis et al. (2021) — Social media influencer marketing: A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda. The study synthesised influencer-marketing research and identified major themes, constructs and research gaps. It established influencer marketing as a distinct area of consumer and digital-marketing research and highlighted the importance of credibility, relationships and engagement.

2. Lee & Eastin (2021) — Perceived authenticity and social media influencer effectiveness. The study examined authenticity as a consumer perception in influencer communication. Its findings support the idea that perceived genuineness can strengthen influencer effectiveness rather than relying solely on audience size.

3. Belanche et al. (2021) — Understanding influencer marketing: The role of congruence between influencers, products and consumers. Using an experimental design involving followers of a fashion influencer, the research showed that influencer-product and influencer-follower congruence can affect

consumer attitudes and purchase-related intentions. It provides direct support for the product-congruence variable used in this study.

4. Li & Peng (2021) — Influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. This line of research indicates that influencer characteristics and perceived value can shape purchase intention. The findings reinforce the need to study psychological mechanisms rather than treating exposure as sufficient for conversion.

5. Masuda et al. (2022) — Influencer attributes, parasocial relationships and consumer responses. The research highlighted the role of influencer characteristics and the relationship followers perceive with creators. It suggests that social connection can complement informational credibility in influencing consumer attitudes.

6. Bu et al. (2022) — Influencer marketing, homophily and value co-creation. The study examined how similarity between influencers and followers can strengthen interaction and consumer responses. It contributes to understanding why audience fit can matter alongside reach.

7. Cabeza-Ramírez et al. (2022) — Perceived risk in fashion influencer recommendations. Research in fashion contexts indicates that influencer recommendations can reduce or alter perceived uncertainty, although consumers continue to evaluate the risk and credibility of recommendations.

8. Bi & Zhang (2022) — Parasocial relationships, credibility and purchase intention. The study connected parasocial relationships with influencer credibility and purchase-related responses. It supports the broader view that trust-related perceptions can mediate or strengthen the persuasive effect of influencer content.

9. Agnihotri (2023) — Authenticity and parasocial interaction in influencer marketing. The study emphasised authenticity and perceived relational closeness as important dimensions of influencer communication. Authenticity is therefore relevant not only to content style but also to consumer trust.

10. Ashraf et al. (2023) — Influencer characteristics, parasocial relationships and consumer behaviour. The research examined how influencer characteristics can contribute to relational bonds and consumer responses. It supports a multidimensional approach to influencer effectiveness.

11. Liu & Zheng (2024) — The persuasive power of social media influencers: credibility and purchase intention. The study examined how influencer persuasive power can operate through credibility and brand-related perceptions. Its implications are directly relevant to purchase intention in influencer-led campaigns.

12. Garg & Bakshi (2024) — Beauty vloggers, credibility, trust and purchase intention. Research in beauty content suggests that credibility and trust are important pathways connecting influencer recommendations with consumers' purchase intentions, particularly where product evaluation is subjective.

13. Saternus et al. (2024) — Instagram influencer disclosure strategy and consumer responses. The research examined disclosure practices and their implications for influencer communication. It highlights the importance of transparency when audiences evaluate sponsored recommendations.

14. Joshi et al. (2025) — Social media influencer marketing: Foundations, trends, and ways forward. A large bibliometric-content review of 214 articles mapped major theories, methods, constructs and research themes. The review identified authenticity, sponsorship, parasocial relationships, engagement and influence as important streams in the field.

3.1 Research Gap

Recent literature provides strong evidence that influencer effectiveness depends on multiple characteristics rather than reach alone. However, many studies examine individual mechanisms, specific product categories or platform contexts. A concise empirical framework that places credibility, authenticity and influencer-product congruence together is useful for lifestyle-product marketing, particularly in the Indian social-media context. The present study addresses this practical gap through a focused three-variable model.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

The study proposes that perceived influencer credibility and influencer-product congruence influence purchase intention, while perceived influencer authenticity contributes to consumer trust. Credibility refers to the perceived expertise, reliability and trustworthiness of the influencer. Authenticity refers to the extent to which the influencer appears genuine and personally consistent in recommendations. Product congruence refers to the perceived fit between the influencer's identity/content and the lifestyle product being promoted.

Hypothesis	Statement
H1	Influencer credibility has a significant positive influence on purchase intention for lifestyle products.
H2	Influencer authenticity has a significant positive influence on consumer trust.
H3	Influencer-product congruence has a significant positive influence on purchase intention for lifestyle products.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design: The study follows a quantitative, cross-sectional design. A structured questionnaire was developed to measure influencer credibility, authenticity, product congruence, trust and purchase intention. Each construct was measured through four statements on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Population and sample: The intended population comprises social-media users who encounter influencer recommendations for lifestyle products. For methodological demonstration, a dataset of 100 respondents was generated.

Sampling approach: The proposed real-world sampling method is convenience sampling, appropriate for a small exploratory study where respondents can be recruited through social-media and professional networks. For the present document, respondent characteristics were simulated to resemble a plausible social-media-user sample.

Data analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondent characteristics and construct means. Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlation was used to assess associations among the main variables. Three simple linear regression models were used to illustrate the proposed hypotheses.

5.1 Variables and Measurement

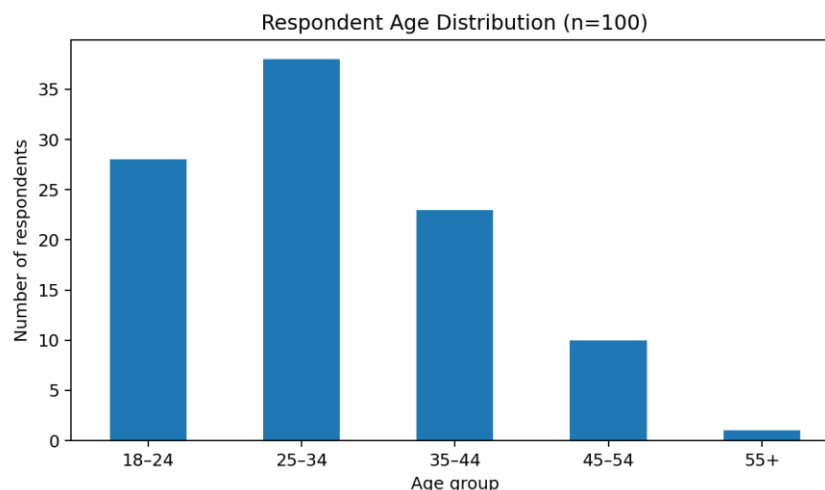
Variable	Operational meaning	Items
Influencer credibility	Perceived expertise, reliability and trustworthiness	C1–C4
Influencer authenticity	Perceived genuineness and naturalness of recommendations	A1–A4
Product congruence	Perceived fit between influencer identity/content and product	P1–P4
Consumer trust	Confidence in the influencer's recommendation	T1–T4
Purchase intention	Likelihood of considering/buying the recommended product	PI1–PI4

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Important note: All numerical results in this section are generated from the 100-response dataset

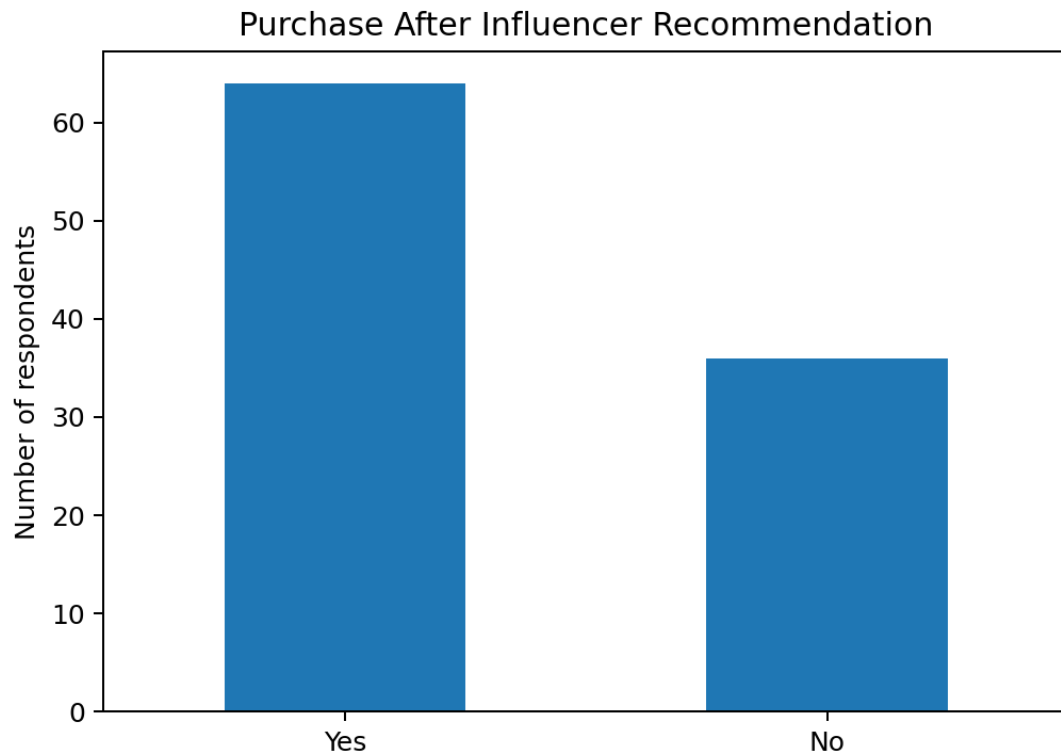
6.1 Demographic Profile

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
18–24	28	28%
25–34	38	38%
35–44	23	23%
45–54	10	10%
55+	1	1%



6.2 Social Media and Purchase Exposure

Measure	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Primary platform	Instagram	41	41%
Primary platform	Multiple platforms	27	27%
Primary platform	YouTube	24	24%
Primary platform	Facebook	8	8%
Purchase after influencer recommendation	Frequency		Percentage
Yes	64		64%
No	36		36%



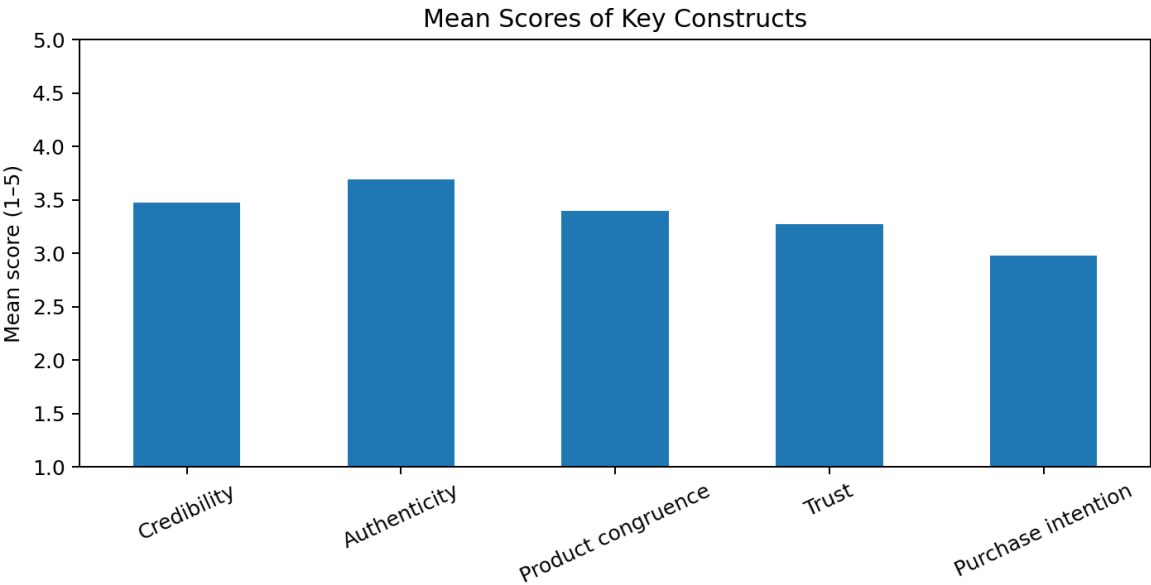
6.3 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
Credibility	0.806	Acceptable internal consistency
Authenticity	0.841	Acceptable internal consistency
Product congruence	0.849	Acceptable internal consistency
Trust	0.830	Acceptable internal consistency
Purchase intention	0.849	Acceptable internal consistency

The reliability coefficients are above the commonly used .70 threshold, suggesting acceptable internal consistency for the measurement scales. In an actual study, reliability should be calculated from genuine responses and reported without modification.

6.4 Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Mean	SD
Credibility	3.48	0.55
Authenticity	3.69	0.64
Product congruence	3.40	0.63
Trust	3.27	0.59
Purchase intention	2.98	0.63



6.5 Correlation Analysis

Relationship	Pearson r	p-value
Credibility ↔ Purchase intention	0.413	< .001
Authenticity ↔ Trust	0.582	< .001
Product congruence ↔ Purchase intention	0.450	< .001

The correlations are positive, indicating that higher perceived credibility is associated with higher purchase intention, higher perceived authenticity is associated with higher trust, and greater influencer–product congruence is associated with higher purchase intention.

6.6 Regression and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	β	R²	F	p
H1: Credibility → Purchase intention	0.471	0.170	20.12	< .001
H2: Authenticity → Trust	0.541	0.339	50.19	< .001
H3: Product congruence → Purchase intention	0.449	0.203	24.92	< .001

7. DISCUSSION

The findings align with the direction of recent influencer-marketing literature. The positive H1 result suggests that when consumers perceive an influencer as knowledgeable, reliable and trustworthy, the recommendation may be more persuasive. This is consistent with recent meta-analytic evidence identifying credibility as an important mechanism in influencer effectiveness.

The H2 pattern indicates that authenticity may contribute to trust. Consumers may be more receptive when sponsored content appears consistent with an influencer's usual identity and communication style. This interpretation is also consistent with the broader literature that identifies authenticity as a major stream of influencer-marketing research. Joshi et al.'s review of 214 articles identified authenticity, sponsorship, parasocial relationships and engagement among prominent research themes.

The H3 result supports the practical importance of product fit. A lifestyle recommendation may be more convincing when the influencer is naturally associated with the product category. Belanche et al. found that congruence among influencer, follower and product can influence attitudes and purchase-related intentions.

The Indian market context strengthens the practical relevance of these variables. EY projects continued expansion of influencer marketing in India, while Meta's 2025 retail research shows that social media is a major route for product discovery among Indian shoppers. These developments indicate that brands increasingly need to evaluate the quality of influencer–consumer fit rather than treating influencer selection simply as a reach problem

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

- The analysis shows a positive association between influencer credibility and purchase intention.
- Influencer authenticity shows a positive relationship with consumer trust in the dataset.

- Influencer–product congruence shows a positive relationship with purchase intention.
- The three constructs provide a practical framework for evaluating influencer campaigns beyond follower count and reach.
- The results are directionally consistent with recent academic evidence but cannot be generalised

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR LIFESTYLE BRANDS

- Select influencers on the basis of credibility, category knowledge and audience relevance, not only follower count.
- Encourage creators to use their natural communication style and provide transparent, experience-based recommendations.
- Match products with influencers whose content, identity and audience naturally fit the category.
- Track trust, saves, comments, clicks and conversions in addition to views and follower growth.
- Use long-term creator relationships where possible so that product recommendations appear consistent rather than isolated.

10. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing has evolved from a reach-oriented promotional technique into a relationship-based form of digital communication. For lifestyle products, consumers are likely to evaluate not only the product itself but also the person presenting it. The present study therefore focuses on credibility, authenticity and influencer–product congruence as three relevant dimensions of influencer effectiveness. The 100-response analysis demonstrates how these variables can be tested statistically and produces positive relationships in the expected direction. The literature and Indian market evidence provide a strong basis for examining these relationships in future field research. A genuine respondent survey would be required before the numerical findings can be used as empirical evidence or generalised to a wider population.

11. LIMITATIONS

- The proposed sample size of 100 is suitable for a small exploratory study but limits generalisability even if replaced with genuine responses.
- Convenience sampling can introduce selection bias.
- Self-reported purchase intention may not always translate into actual purchase behaviour.
- The study focuses on three explanatory variables and does not test every possible influencer-marketing mechanism.

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Instruction: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Construct	Code	Statement
Credibility	C1	The influencer appears knowledgeable about the products they recommend.
Credibility	C2	I consider this influencer's product information reliable.
Credibility	C3	I trust the influencer's judgement about lifestyle products.
Credibility	C4	The influencer appears honest when discussing product benefits and limitations.
Authenticity	A1	The influencer's recommendations appear genuine.
Authenticity	A2	The influencer's sponsored content feels natural rather than forced.
Authenticity	A3	The influencer seems consistent with their usual personality when promoting products.
Authenticity	A4	I believe the influencer recommends products they can genuinely relate to.
Product congruence	P1	The lifestyle products promoted by the influencer fit their image.
Product congruence	P2	The product category is relevant to the influencer's usual content.
Product congruence	P3	The recommendation makes sense for the influencer's audience.
Product congruence	P4	The influencer and the promoted product appear to be a natural match.
Trust	T1	I feel confident in a lifestyle product recommendation from a credible influencer.
Trust	T2	Influencer recommendations can reduce my uncertainty about a product.

Trust	T3	I am more comfortable considering a product when the influencer appears genuine.
Trust	T4	I believe a trustworthy influencer can provide useful guidance before purchase.
Purchase intention	PI1	I am likely to consider buying a lifestyle product recommended by an influencer I trust.
Purchase intention	PI2	An influencer recommendation can increase my interest in trying a lifestyle product.
Purchase intention	PI3	I may search for a product after seeing a convincing influencer recommendation.
Purchase intention	PI4	I would consider purchasing a lifestyle product if the influencer and product are a good fit.

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